AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Original) A method of processing postal articles, each having an outside surface suitable for receiving a label onto which information can be printed if the outside surface is not itself a printable surface, in which method, a physical magnitude is measured for each postal article in order to detect (2) whether the outside surface of said postal article (5) is made of a plastics material, the method being characterized in that it further consists in forming a digital image of said outside surface of the article, in performing processing on the digital image in order to detect (2) whether the outside surface of the article has a noisy background, and on the basis of the results of both kinds of detection, in determining whether the outside surface of said article is a

printable surface or a non-printable surface.

2. (Original) A method according to claim 1, in which the method (2) of detecting a surface made of plastics material consists in moving each article (5) past a reflection detector (6) having one or more calibrated emitting and receiving photocells (11, 14).

3. (Original) A method according to claim 2, in which the reflection detector (6) is a brightness detector emitting and receiving radiation (12) in the infrared range.

4. (Currently Amended) A method according to ~~any preceding claim~~claim 1, in which use is made of a multiple gray level digital image (9) of the outside surface of the article in order to detect whether said outside surface is a surface with a noisy background.

5. (Currently Amended) A method according to ~~any preceding claim~~claim 1, in which the results of the two detection operations (2, 3) are combined by means of a logical OR in order to determine whether said article has a surface that is printable or surface that is not printable.

6. (Currently Amended) A machine (1) for sorting postal articles, which machine includes an automatic address-recognition module, the machine being characterized in that it is adapted to implement the method according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 5~~claim 1, with detection of a noisy background being performed in the automatic address-recognition module.